

actions that kill the soul, and living men become dead units. There are millions in this land who are soul-less. Lust produces sex perversions (birth-control is one of them), anger produces hatred (communalism is a species of it), greed produces selfishness (family law-suits are an example) and these tend to poison the soul. All intoxicants are poisonous and slowly lessen the power of the soul in the body.

Soul-nourishment must be sought and we must hunger and thirst after it. Soul-knowledge is desired when lust and anger and greed do not disturb. Most men are not aware of the sweets and high pleasures of soul-knowledge, as the eater of dogs who never tasted fruit knows not its lusciousness. Once the fruit is tasted and its juice currents mingle in our blood the hunger for it begins. Intuitively all men long for soul-contentment and soul-growth, because in golden ages of the past the impress of wisdom was burnt into them by the Compassionate Ones. Now, darkness envelops us, for this is the dark age, Kali Yuga ; and soul-knowledge changes decade by decade—candle light, oil-light, gas-light, electric light, because there is no Sun.

This innate desire for spiritual life leads people in wrong paths, because they mistake the part for the whole and the semblance for the reality. But in this verse Master Krishna gives one word, the Supreme, which the hungry soul needs. The most objectionable feature of orthodox religions is the false and unspiritual view of Deity. Spirit is materialized, God is carnalized and egotism enlarges the shadow of the cruel task-master which it fears. Such is the magic of Maya !

Supreme, Param, is described at length in this chapter—the one impartite, omnipresent Self, which is the Source and Soul of every creature. The Inner Ruler in the heart of each is the King of Kings, and it is the knowledge about It, the science of Its emanations, the philosophy of Its permeation, for which we must hunger and thirst.

In a famine-stricken land people eat whatever comes ; so it is now. Carrion, strewn all around, is near at hand and people devour it. Rather that we die than pollute the shrine of the Soul ! False ways which look like short-cuts are impulsively taken. Dangerous practices which sound easy are ignorantly adopted. False knowledge is accepted because it sounds plausible,—for example, the craze for worship of the dead called Spiritualism.

The effort to know what the soul is, as taught by the Knowers of the Self—that is the first step. There are hungers and hungers, but we must hunger after the Self within and It will guide us to the food It verily needs. The *Gita* answers both questions—what is the soul ? what is soul-nourishment ?—and as we shall see later, it expounds in detail how that nourishment should be absorbed and assimilated.

First then, let us hunger and thirst after the Soul within.

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